

**Patent claims**

1. A packaging casing, in particular sausage casing, which consists of knitted fabric or contains the latter as a strengthening constituent and has at least one seam with a release thread, characterized in that the release thread loses its strength under the influence of a treatment compatible with the packaging contents or as a result of a time lapse.
2. The casing as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that it is a shape-determining casing net surrounding the actual sausage casing.
3. The casing as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the release thread is temperature-sensitive.
4. The casing as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the release thread is thermoplastic.
5. The casing as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on embrittlement.
6. The casing as claimed in claims 1 or 2, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on the fact that the latter or an essential constituent is soluble in a treatment medium.
7. The casing as claimed in one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that a plurality of the longitudinal seams with release thread are distributed over the circumference.

8. A method for opening a packaging casing, in particular sausage casing, which consists of a knitted fabric or contains the latter as a strengthening constituent and has at least one seam with a release thread, characterized in that, before opening, the loss in strength of the release thread is awaited, which takes place under the influence of a treatment compatible with the packaging contents or a result of a time lapse.

9. The method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the release thread loses its strength at a release temperature which lies above the temperature of any treatment of the packaged packaging content and below a temperature at which the packaging contents may be damaged during the period of time required for releasing the release thread, and in that the release thread is heated to the release temperature in order to open the casing.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the packaging contents, together with the packaging casing, are subjected to a treatment, as a result of which their dimensional stability grows and the strength of the release thread is reduced.

11. The method as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the release thread contains a binding or softening constituent which is at least partially removed as a result of the treatment.

12. The method as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the treatment is wet, and the release thread loses its strength at least partially as a result of the subsequent drying.